643 241 782 pronounces a few sacramental words and lightly sprinkles the millet, saying: "Zâbre saga Ybéogo sâga, samb'da kôbo la ka toin sameb'la fi yé (the morning and evening rains may put a stop to the cultivation of the fields, but cannot injure the health of the King)." He next takes a straw broom (sagha) and pulls it apart in order to get a bit of millet to put into the lagha mentioned [343] above. He goes then to the temporary granary (lourgho, granary made of Mossi secco) and walks around it three times. An emissary of the emperor gives him a white rooster (nora-pelga), some beer (dam), and zom-kom (water with flour in it). The priest sits down in the shade of the lourgho and before making the sacrifice pronounces the following words: "Naba Siguiri bad'kom, deghin kon Naba Wogbo, tib reg, kon Naba Sanum, tib kon Naba Koutou, tib reg' kon Naba Baongo, tib kon Naba Karfo, tib reg'kon Naba Sawadogo, tib reg la be kon Nab, gnimassem, la lafi," which means literally, "I offer this rooster, this water with flour, and this beer to Naba Siguiri (father of the reigning emperor) in order that he will persuade the Mogho Nabas Wobgo, Sanum, Koukou, Baongo, Karfo, and Sawadogo, to accept them, so that the emperor may enjoy good health and happiness."

The Tengsoba then hands the small quantity of millet [254] which he took earlier to the pugtiéma (first wife of the king) to be made into a millet cake and offered to the spirits (manes of deceased emperors and other spirits of the threshing floor).

643 251 Transporting the millet to the granaries. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the Mogho Naba are alone given the duty of carrying the millet to the granaries (baoré) (1). We have already noted that

1. This baoré granary is made of earth mixed with quantities of straw.

there are supposed to be a hundred loads of grain, even though the harvest may not fill twenty baskets. The number of baskets required by custom is attained by putting a small quantity of millet in each basket.

643 241 The millet intentionally left on the zéiga. A little millet is purposely left here and there on the zéiga, and the Kassiri Naba (village chief) takes it for his own use. This signal favor, however,

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Above: Water Carriers.
Below: Youths Returning from the Bush with Bundles of Straw.

Above: Threshing Millet.
Below: Winnowing Millet. Millet Granaries in the Background.

2:Mangin--56a M-5 (ca. 1910) 1921 FA28 Mossi FA28

for roasting and is replaced with green millet, eaten raw after being beaten with a small stick to remove the chaff. /47/ Certain kinds of large millet are sweet and not too unpleasant to eat in this fashion. Horses grow fat because millet is their staple food and they may eat as much as they please. Men also profit greatly, because beer brewed from new millet tastes much better than that made from old millet, and when millet abounds, drink is never wanting. At this time rice is harvested, threshed on the threshing floors, and laid aside carefully for festive occasions.

At the end of October the rains have stopped almost completely. The beans are gathered and laid out in the fields on millet stalks or on séko held up from the ground by forked stakes to keep the termites from eating them, or the beans may be brought home and tossed on the séko which serve as shelters in front of the soukala. Now is the time to harvest the small millet, which is dry. The millet stalks are severed at ground level by the men and laid out with all heads oriented in the same direction to facilitate the work of the women, who cut off the heads and gather them in heaps. When the millet has been cut, the women fill their baskets. The largest containers are used for the occasion, and each woman uses her ingenuity to pile the millet as high as possible over her basket, using the longest ears or bean stems as supports, like the Zouaves who vie for the tallest pack. Should the line of women on their way back to the village meet a man known for his generosity, they sing, cry out, and surround him until he throws them a few handfuls of cowries to buy a jar of beer.

As they near the threshing floor their cries get louder, and each woman comes to the granary and hands her basket to the man who stands there. These granaries are very crudely built and consist basically of sticks driven into the ground in a circle to hold up a séko which is wrapped around them. The floor is made up of another séko, usually resting on the ground but sometimes raised on stones or forked sticks to avoid termites. This is where the millet is placed prior to threshing. The granaries stand around the threshing floor of beaten earth, which is located 100 or 200 meters from the village, sometimes even farther. Thieves are no important threat. They may cut down millet when it stands in the bush, but they rarely steal millet already stored. Only goats, sheep, and guinea hens are to be feared, and they are kept away from the granaries by thorns.

As soon as these heavier tasks are over, everyone digs up peanuts and peas. The whole family gathers under the shade of a tree, and

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
24/ the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
47/ gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

243 Kassouna. We have already seen that the Kassonboura once grew it extensively. The Boussansé also cultivate it.

On the other hand, the Mossi grow a little sweet millet (or tiokandé). They call it mobinoro. This is the sampa of the Bambara, the gamba of the Kassonboura. The Mossi, like the Kassonboura and Bambara, sow this millet in small quantities in the maize fields that surround the soukala. The Nounouma, Kassonfra, and Sissala do not cultivate it.

222 Aside from cultivated millet, the Mossi are familiar with the bakat or wild millet, also called "bird's millet." They call it nadanga. This is the bouaboua of the Bambara, the mintoro of the Kassouna. Among the Mossi, in times of famine, the women go and cut it down, lay it in the sun to dry and crush it, for it contains a small edible grain. There is little to be found in Gouroungа territory, although some of it does grow by the watercourses /marigots/ and could be utilized in times of famine.

243 /471/ Aside from millet, the food crop most extensively cultivated by the Mossi is maize, which they call kamana. Maize is grown around the soukala itself rather than in the bush. It is sown at the beginning of the rainy season. First the soil is turned up with the ouaka, and then holes are made with a koutiaga or hatchet. Two or three grains of maize are placed in each hole, and then covered up. Once this has been done the millet is allowed to grow, and when the stalk has come out of the ground the weeds are cleared with the ouaka. After this it takes two months and ten days for the maize to ripen. It is harvested in August, first among the grains. The stalks are dug out or cut down with a daba, or else they are simply broken by hand.

Once the stalks have been laid down, the ears are cut off. They are left to dry in the sun on the roofs, where they are suspended in [251] clusters. Then they are stored in the grain hut, from which they are removed when the kernels are to be made into flour.

252 It often happens that instead of being left to dry, the ears of maize are eaten green, roasted on the embers.

After the maize has been stored and allowed to dry, the women pound the kernels into flour. This flour is placed in boiling water to make soft cakes which are eaten immediately.

243 Maize, let us point out, is one of those crops that are harvested early. The Mossi, and as we know all black populations of West

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (moĩ in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

[554] At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed.

[35] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 252 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

244 The Mossi grow considerable quantities of peanuts (nangouri in Mossi, n'tiga in Bambara, gherté in Peuhl and Toucouleur).

No earth mounds are made for the cultivation of peanuts among the Mossi. The peanuts are sown five or six days after the millet. Holes are made with a koutiaga, one or two peanuts are placed in each hole and then covered up. When the shoots appear, the weeds are removed with the ouaka. When the peanuts are ripe (end of October), the pods are dug up with the ouaka. /473/ They are left 251 to dry in the sun for three or four days, and then they are taken to the village in baskets. Again the peanuts are left to dry on the clay roofs of the huts, and then placed in the little straw huts already mentioned from which they are removed only to be eaten. The 252 peanuts are roasted. They are also used, although not very often, to prepare sauces eaten with millet.

231 The greens of the plant do not go to waste. They are gathered and given to horses, and make excellent fodder for them.

244 In addition to peanuts, the Mossi grow considerable quantities of underground peas. Not everyone grows them, however. The underground peas are sown after all the other grains and tubercles.

The grass is cut on the spot where the peas are to be grown, but it is left there to serve as fertilizer. Then, holes are made into the ground with the koutiaga, and the sowing is done. When the plant begins to shoot, the weeds are pulled out by hand rather than with the ouaka, since the latter would remove everything. The underground peas ripen in three months. They are gathered at the same time as the peanuts, that is to say, in October. The peas are dug 251 out of the soil with the ouaka. They are cleaned, left to dry, placed 252 in baskets, and carried to the little straw huts. They are eaten boiled.

244 The Mossi also grow sesame, which they call sili. They cultivate it in small bush plots. Sesame is sown at the height of the winter season, three months after the first rains. The soil is scraped with the ouaka, and the grains carried in a little gourd are spread upon the ground. The sesame emerges from the ground ten days later. Men, women, and children pull out the weeds by hand. The harvesting is done when the stalks have reached 1.50 meters in height (immediately following the harvest of the small millet). The stalks are severed at mid-height with a knife and then laid out on